



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

always undo its bad effects, nor take place without new sacrifices, yet that is a truly enviable condition of human existence, where either errors will not be committed, or the power of correcting them is in the hands of those who suffer. The American nation is in that condition, and before it can cease to be so, many things worse than a heavy tariff must be borne ; and when it ceases to be so, the liberty of trade will not be worth saving.

ART. XIII.—MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES.

1.—*Boston Prize Poems, and other Specimens of Dramatic Poetry.* Boston. 1824.

THIS little work comprises a selection from the poems, presented during the last winter to the managers of the Boston Theatre for the prize, proposed by them on the occasion of a Jubilee in honor of Shakspeare. Several of these compositions are very respectable ; and the Ode marked No. 1, may be thought by some not to fall far short of that which obtained the premium. Mr Sprague, the successful candidate, gained the prizes both in Philadelphia and New York, for the best prologue on the opening of the theatres lately erected there. We believe that there were more than twenty candidates in each of these cases. The chance is against any man's writing good poetry upon a trite subject, and one not selected by himself. But to have succeeded thrice in such a trial is more than could be expected to happen to any poet. There is good fortune as well as desert in it ; the judges may be all men of discernment ; but there is such a difficulty in coming to an agreement in matters of mere taste, and the standard is so loose and various, that the chances of repeated success are much against any one individual, whatever may be his talents.

The Ode of Mr Sprague opens with an invocation to the ' God of the glorious lyre.' The second stanza setting forth the invasion of the northern barbarians is highly picturesque.

Fierce from the frozen north,
When havoc led his legions forth,
O'er learning's sunny groves the dark destroyers spread ;
In dust the sacred statue slept,
Fair science round her altars wept,
And wisdom cowed his head.

‘In dust the sacred statue slept’ is objectionable from its obscurity. It cannot without violence be applied to ‘Learning,’ which is personified as a living being in the preceding line, as are Wisdom and Science in the two lines immediately following. The closing lines more than redeem this slight error. Learning retreating into the Monasteries, is finely expressed by ‘Wisdom cowed his head.’ The poet next describes Apollo as descending upon the shores of the Avon ;

There, on its bank, beneath the Mulberry’s shade,
 Wrapped in young dreams, a wild-eyed minstrel strayed,
 Lighting there and lingering long,
 Thou didst teach the bard his song ;
 Thy fingers strung his sleeping shell,
 And round his brows a garland curled ;
 On his lips thy spirit fell,
 And bade him wake and warm the world.

The verse which paints the charms of a romantic solitude,

Where beauty’s child, the frowning world forgot,
 To youth’s devoted tale is listening,
 Rapture on her dark lash glistening,
 While fairies leave their cowslip cells and guard the happy spot,

presents one of the most pleasing and artless pictures in the whole Ode.

The perturbed slumbers of Richard the Third are filled with poetical and sombre images.

Mark the sceptred traitor slumbering !
 There flit the slaves of conscience round,
 With boding tongue foul murders numbering ;
 Sleep’s leaden portals catch the sound.
 In his dream of blood for mercy quaking,
 At his own dull scream behold him waking !
 Soon that dream to fate shall turn,
 For him the living furies burn ;
 For him the vulture sits on yonder misty peak,
 And chides the lagging night, and whets her hungry beak.

The prophetic truth of the vision is finely expressed by the line

‘ Soon that dream to fate shall turn.’

The remainder of the stanza is too much crowded with unwieldy epithets and useless allegory. ‘The God of slaughter guides his reeking axle over spouting trunks ;’ the ‘panting tyrant scours the field, until he is met by vengeance with his dooming blade.’ &c.

The concluding verse,

And Hate’s last lightning quivers from his eyes,
 is nervous but not natural.

In the following stanza, which describes Lear exposed to the fury of the night storm, we have an affecting picture of him mourning over the dead body of Cordelia.

Yet one was ever kind,
 Why lingers she behind ?
 O pity !—view him by her dead form kneeling,
 Even in wild frenzy holy nature feeling.
 His aching eyeballs strain
 To see those curtained orbs unfold,
 That beauteous bosom heave again,—
 But all is dark and cold.

The fourth line, 'even in wild frenzy' &c, has the same beautiful idea, though not so obviously expressed, with one in a former poem of Mr Sprague, which obtained the prize at Philadelphia. Speaking of a love crazed maiden he there says,

Round some cold grave she comes sweet flowers to strew,
 And lost to reason, still to love is true.

At the conclusion of his verses upon Lear, the poet breaks off into a bold apostrophe to his own Muse.

Down trembling wing—shall insect weakness keep
 The sun defying eagle's sweep ?

The principal defect in the poem is a want of perfect ease and simplicity. A rich and warm fancy is felt throughout the whole of it, but instead of richness we sometimes find an accumulation of cumbrous epithets ; and its energy appears sometimes to be owing to unnatural effort. Although this straining may add something to the force of the expression, it is apt to diminish its grace and natural beauty.

We have perhaps been hypercritical in some of these comments. We should not have been so, had the general merits of the Ode been less. It has found great favor with the public, to which it is justly entitled by its lyrical animation, its elevated conceptions, and the warm coloring given to them by an active poetical fancy. We trust Mr Sprague's muse will not require in future the stimulus of theatrical competition to bring her before the public. A writer, who, like him, has it in his power to raise our poetry to a higher character, we should hope would feel himself under strong obligations not to suffer his talents to lie unemployed, or become lost to the literature of his country.

The poem immediately following Mr Sprague's in this selection has many passages of dignified and quiet beauty. Shakspeare opening the scene with the magic wand of Prospero is a conception the more happy, as the Tempest was probably the first play in which he displayed his dramatic talent.

But none had won the high award.
 Then rose in might old Avon's bard.
 Glancing his heavenward eye, he waved his hand,
 And struck the scene with Prospero's powerful wand.
 Lo, to the magic touch all nature yield !
 The secret forms that unknown worlds concealed,

The fairy ring, the witches cave,
 The sacred mysteries of the grave,
 At his command came visibly to light ;
 The spirits in air and sea that dwell,
 Or lie within the cowslip's bell,
 In clear and bodily shape, salute the astonished sight.
 Then burst the applauding shout from all around ;
 The hills and heavens resound
 With Shakspeare's name,
 And on his brow descends the wreath of living flame.

The pictures of Ophelia and of Cordelia are full of natural pathos.

But when the Bard of Avon touched the string,
 And bade the love lorn, crazed Ophelia sing,
 Rehearsed the sad, sweet tale of Juliet's charms,
 And placed Cordelia in the old king's arms,
 Every heart dissolved in grief,
 Tears burst from every eye ;
 And nothing, save one deep and general sigh,
 Broke the long pause in which they sought relief.
 Sublime that stillness of the countless crowd !
 When myriads spake not, moved not, nor aloud
 Vented their feeling ; but, in sobs suppressed,
 Calmed down the heaving tumult of the breast.

We have not room for farther extracts. The remaining pieces possess very different degrees of merit. Some of them afford glimpses of a just poetical feeling, while others seem to have been written without the aid, and sometimes we should fear without the entire approbation of the muse.



2.—*Arguments against the Justice and Policy of Taxing the Capital Stock of Banks and Insurance Companies in the State of New York.* 8vo. pp. 34. New York. 1824.

Whoever would see the arguments against the justice and policy of taxing moneyed institutions briefly and forcibly stated, will find it done with much ingenuity and ability in this pamphlet. The author arranges his arguments with method and clearness, and reasons well from his own principles. In some of the more important of these, however, we do not agree with him. He makes actual property, as lands, houses, merchandise, the *only* basis of taxation ; and hence he infers, that paper capital, being no more than the representative of these, or, as he calls it, the mere sign of credit, ought not to be taxed. That is, no man ought at the same time to be taxed for actual property, and the representative of

that property, or the credit which rests on it. This is said to be double taxation, equally unjust and impolitic.

But however this principle may apply in any particular case, we think it can by no means be considered general and fundamental. Why does a legislature claim the right of taxing any kind of property? Is it not because it protects such property in the hands of the owner, and ensures him facilities of employing it to advantage? Now if this same legislature grants him other privileges by which he may be equally benefited, why should he not pay an equal tax on these privileges? In other words, why is not *credit*, as such, a proper subject of taxation, when this credit has been created and is sustained by the legislature which imposes the tax? If a company of individuals may establish a bank by legislative grant, and thereby have the means of raising their credit and of making a profit, which they could not before make by any private disposition of their property, why should they not pay a tax on this credit? There may be cases in which it would be inexpedient to levy such a tax, but we can see no injustice in it. As far as we can discern, it is strictly just for a legislature to tax any species of property, whether real or nominal, lands, stocks, or credit, whenever the current value of these kinds of property is founded on privileges granted and protected by the same legislature, or whenever the possessors derive a profit, which they could not have derived except by these privileges. As banks, and other moneyed institutions chartered by legislatures, are to be ranked under these conditions, we see no reason, either in right or justice, why they should not be taxed. Policy and expediency may doubtless sometimes render such a measure unwise, but this point we are not about to discuss.

It is not a legitimate inference to say, as has been intimated, that this principle would allow a legislature to tax credits of every description existing in the common intercourse of society. It is true, that all credit is remotely founded on the confidence, which one man puts in another by reason of the security given by the laws to property, and of the validity of contracts which they establish. But the difference between this kind of credit, and that created by privileged institutions, is so strongly marked as to make it impossible that they should ever be confounded. The former is a credit, which every citizen is equally aided by the laws in acquiring, whereas the latter depends entirely on special grants of the legislature in favor of particular individuals; and on this ground alone, they may properly be taxed for their exclusive advantages.

We have only to add, that we do not perceive much weight in the argument drawn from an imaginary legislative power over a man's profession and pursuits. It is said, that a man's intellect

might as well be taxed, as his credit. So it might, if the legislature could supply one as easily as the other. Here is the difference, and it is enough to show, that there is no parallel in the examples. If a man could become wise, learned, and skilful, by legislative acts, and should thereby have it in his power to gain more than his fellow citizens, who had not been thus favored, he might with great propriety be taxed in exact proportion to the wisdom, learning, and skill thus obtained by legislative charter. Till such an instance occur, the argument will be without premises and without point.

3.—*Elements of Geography, Ancient and Modern ; with an Atlas.* BY J. E. WORCESTER, A. M. Stereotype Edition. Boston. Cummings, Hilliard & Co. 1824.

Sketches of the Earth and its Inhabitants ; with one Hundred Engravings. BY J. E. WORCESTER. 2 vols. 12mo. Cummings, Hilliard & Co. 1823.

THESE works are already so extensively known, and so generally used, that our testimony to the fidelity and industry with which they are executed can be of but little importance. It is known, that Mr Worcester has long devoted himself to geographical pursuits, and he has obtained of the public such success, as his diligence and accuracy have merited. Perhaps there are no subjects on which it is so difficult to avoid occasional inaccuracies, as those connected with political geography. In many countries there are no means of collecting information on statistics; in others all knowledge of this kind is carefully retained by the governments. Besides this, the compiler must depend on the reports of others. Though he may not himself be credulous, his judgment may often be led to adopt opinions, to which the credulity of the travellers, on whom he relies, may have given currency.

The study of geography is an important branch of education. It enlarges the understanding, and gives it a wider range. While historical pursuits teach the mind to go back into distant ages, and thus prevent it from being contracted and limited by the present moment, the study of the earth and its inhabitants raises it above the equally narrow limits of place, and opens sources of various and improving observations on the different aspects of nature and of man. Whether we consider this study, as having for its object a knowledge of the world in its present condition, or to lay the foundation for the pursuits of history, it is desirable at first to direct the mind of the learner to physical geography. The great features of Nature must be distinctly observed; and by these we

mean, primarily, the ridges of mountains, next the rivers with their courses, and the slope of the land, and then the seas, gulfs, and oceans. We believe it would be productive of great advantage, if maps or a globe were exhibited to the pupil, without a name of a country or a town, but showing the earth, as it exists, independent of social divisions. This branch of geography, which appears to us as a necessary preliminary to the easy and successful study of the political divisions, is capable of being much more simplified, than it has yet been done in our elementary works. To those, who are desirous of seeing the subject treated in a philosophical manner, by a scholar of eminent learning and unwearied industry, may be recommended the *Physical Geography* of Professor Charles Ritter of the royal military school at Berlin, as a work full of original and trustworthy researches and views, calculated to excite and to gratify curiosity, and as the most elaborate and careful production on the department of knowledge to which it belongs.

Mr Worcester's geography appears to us a most excellent manual. It is concise, well arranged, free from redundancies and repetitions, and contains exactly what it should, a brief outline of the natural and political characteristics of each country. We could have wished to see a general sketch of the natural features and divisions of the earth included in the introductory matter, but are not disposed to question the propriety of the author's judgment in omitting it. The tabular views are of great value, for they assist in forming the habit of comparison, and are also of advantage to the memory, by associating many similar facts in classes. A very concise abridgment of ancient geography is annexed, and this is peculiarly serviceable to those, who are afterwards to be introduced to history, while it can be omitted by such as have no interest in antiquity.

We might be charged, perhaps, with want of discrimination, were we to speak so decidedly in favor of the 'Sketches.' A work like this, embracing so many topics, must in the nature of things possess different degrees of merit in its different parts. It may be good as a whole, and imperfect in some of its particulars, and in this light we regard the present work. All that relates to natural curiosities, the descriptions of remarkable monuments and works of art, rivers, mountains, lakes, and the striking geographical features of the earth, is highly important and valuable, and well adapted to the instruction of the class of pupils for whom the work is designed. But we have less confidence in those parts, which speak of the manners, customs, and habits of civilised and uncivilised nations. Where manners and general character are in their great outlines so similar, as they are in all nations, which possess European culture, it is but promoting a superficial acquaintance with them to bestow general censure and praise, to give pictures of

Italians, and Frenchmen, and Englishmen, and Germans, as if they did not all dress very much in the same way, and look very much alike. Little information is communicated about the English, when they are spoken of as reserved, or of the Italian, when he is called licentious and perfidious.

We object, therefore, to some of the chapters, which are entitled ‘Inhabitants, Manners, and Customs.’ We see no reason for putting in school books, that the Canadians sometimes boil water in a frying pan, [vol. I. p. 41.] or that the sovereign people of these New England States do, in the large towns, breakfast on bread and butter, [p. 67,] and that the ladies are characterised ‘by sweetness and gentleness, blended with sprightly energy.’ This is no doubt very true, but hardly suited for the edification of boys at school. When it is said, moreover, that among the Germans, ‘the lover scarcely ever approaches the object of his affection but with a pipe in his mouth,’ the ludicrous is carried too far. The account of the French would seem to have been copied from some prejudiced writer. They are characterised as ‘a gay, lively, volatile people; more influenced by sentiment and passion than by sedate judgment; impelled by the ideas of the moment, without regard to the probable consequences; generally destitute of fixed principles of morality and virtue; floating between superstition and infidelity; and exhibiting amidst the most temperate habits in ordinary life, a warmth and vehemence, at which cool observers are surprised and disgusted.’ [vol. II. pp. 11, 12.] This mode of describing the character of a whole nation at a dash is very objectionable, for although it may communicate some accurate impressions, it scatters censure and reproach with a less discriminative hand than strict justice would seem to require.

But notwithstanding these defects, many of which, perhaps, it would not be easy to avoid in a work necessarily founded on the authority of others, we consider the ‘Sketches’ well suited to give a large fund of entertainment and information to the youthful mind.



4.—*Prose by a Poet.* 2 vols. 12mo. Philadelphia. Abraham Small. 1824.

THESE little volumes are understood to have been written by Montgomery, and they partake strongly of the spirit and manner, which characterise the poetical compositions of their amiable author. They display the same depth of feeling and delicacy of sentiment, the same sprightliness of fancy and felicity of thought, and the same mellowed tone of quiet sadness, which communicate

a charm to his other writings. The author's mind is of a peculiar cast, but it is the mind of a poet, and of one who has learned

‘To look on nature—hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue ;’

a mind, which has known the ‘joy of elevated thoughts,’ and felt

‘A sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and the mind of man,
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.’

The style, manner, and subjects of the volumes before us fully illustrate the title. Several of the pieces are wrought up with happy flights of poetical conception, sometimes perhaps a little too fantastical, yet always sprightly and well sustained. We would name the ‘Life of a Flower,’ and the ‘Moon and the Stars,’ as among what we deem the author's most successful efforts, and as being marked with the traits here mentioned. On some occasions he is playful and witty, as in his ‘Journal at Scarborough;’ and we suppose he meant to be so in ‘Pen, Ink, and Paper,’ which is among the best of the pieces. He has two or three specimens of poetry in rhyme and measure, but these will have few admirers compared with some of the others, which are clothed in the dress of a graceful, easy, simple, and perspicuous prose.



- 5.—*A New General Atlas, comprising a complete Set of Maps representing the general Divisions of the Globe; together with the several Empires, Kingdoms, and States of the World; compiled from the latest Authorities, and corrected by the most recent Discoveries.* Philadelphia. Anthony Finley. 1824.

THE number of elegant maps and atlases, which have come from the press within a short time in the United States, is a most flattering proof of the increased attention of the community to the important study of geography, and of the liberal enterprise and zeal of our publishers and artists. The present work is very much on the plan of Mr Lucas's splendid Cabinet Atlas, which we noticed in our last number. It contains sixty maps, about half of which are devoted to the American continent, and the remainder to other

parts of the world, chiefly to Europe. Considerable care seems to have been taken to delineate with accuracy the features of the United States, and to supply the deficiencies of previous works as far as the means of knowledge would allow. There is a table of the comparative heights of mountains, and another of the lengths of rivers ; and the collection as a whole is sufficiently extensive and minute to serve the purposes of general reference. The engraving is done almost uniformly with remarkable distinctness, and the face of the maps is frequently beautiful, not overloaded with a confusion of useless names, nor disfigured with imaginary mountains and crooked streams. The marks of taste and careful execution, which are seen in a large proportion of the maps recently published, are worthy of the highest commendation.

6.—*Hobomok, a Tale of Early Times.* By an American. pp. 128. 12mo. Cummings, Hilliard & Co. Boston. 1824.

This tale displays considerable talent, which we hope will be again called into exercise. It embraces a period soon after the settlement of New England, and the events of the story take place chiefly in Salem and Plymouth. The principal characters, some of which are historical, as Governor Endicott, Lady Arabella Johnson and her husband, are generally very well conceived and supported ; the sketches of society and manners are drawn with a faithful hand ; the incidents are detailed with a truth and spirit, which give animation and interest to the story. The author has an eye for the beautiful and sublime of external nature, and a heart for the tender and generous traits of the human character.

In many respects this little work is calculated deeply to engage the feelings, and in some parts it possesses considerable pathos. We regard it, however, rather as an earnest of what the author can do, than as a performance from which he can promise himself much reputation. With all its merits it has defects, which prevent it from leaving, upon the whole, a favorable or a pleasing impression. We think it a fault in the plan of so short a work, that it introduces so many characters and incidents not immediately connected with the main object ; they do not sufficiently bear upon that which is the principal business of the piece ; they do not contribute to advance the action, but rather divert the mind, and weaken the interest by multiplying the objects of the attention. It spreads over too wide a field ; it consumes, if we may use such an expression, too much historical material for a tale of this kind. We are persuaded the author of *Hobomok* would have succeeded better had he made it entirely a work of fancy, so far as characters and inci-

dents are concerned, and merely attempted to illustrate the circumstances, situation, and manners of our forefathers and the aborigines, and the scenery of our country. As it is, there is a want of unity, which prevents a sustained and continued interest. There is a great number of particular passages, which by themselves have every requisite of a fine novel, but they fail as parts of a whole. In general, we believe, it will be found that the most interesting narrations are those, which are minute in the detail of events and conversation, and which embrace but a small portion of time; those in which all the circumstances cluster around a few characters, producing a single and concentrated interest.

To our minds there is a very considerable objection to the catastrophe of this story. A high born and delicate female, on the supposed death of her lover, has, in a fit of insane despondency, offered herself as the wife of an Indian chief, and has become such, according to the customs of his nation. She lives with him three years, and an infant semisavage is the offspring of the union. At the end of that time, her white lover returns; her copper one with great magnanimity relinquishes her and departs, and she is married to the former. Now this is a train of events not only unnatural, but revolting, we conceive, to every feeling of delicacy in man or woman.

We may appear perhaps to have found more to blame than praise in this tale; we do not wish to leave this impression. Its excellencies outweigh its faults. We have been more particular in speaking of the latter, because we hope to hear again from the author, and feel assured that they are only the results of inexperience in this kind of writing; that the author may amend them and at the same time retain all the other qualifications for a good writer, which are here exhibited.

We regret that the article, which we have before promised, on Mr Phillips' work on the Law of Insurance, was not received in time for the present number.